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SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(HEALTH & CULTURE) ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE
FOURTH NATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION AT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE
CONFERENCE ROOM ON THURSDAY 3 FEB 83 AT 3.00 PM

Let me begin by announcing that three of the winners of the 1982 National Music Competition have been invited to perform at the 35th Anniversary Hong Kong Schools Music Festival at the end of March 1983. This invitation was issued to them soon after the Grand Finals of the 1982 Competition which, by chance, was attended by an influential personality in the Hong Kong music circle.

The above announcement is to illustrate how the annual competition jointly organised by the Ministry and the Singapore Music Society has fulfilled its objectives. By providing the occasion and opportunity to young musicians to display their talents and skills under competitive situations, they might be talent-spotted for the honours of performing abroad, in addition to the local recitals arranged by the Ministry, the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, the Singapore Youth Orchestra and other interested cultural organisations.

The National Music Competition was first organised by the Singapore Music Society in 1955 to provide students of Western musical instruments the opportunity to prove their talents and skills. Today in its fourth year under the joint leadership of the Ministry and the Singapore Music Society, it also provides the same opportunities to students of Chinese musical instruments as well as students of a wider range of Western musical instruments.

The fourth Competition will be conducted in much the same way as the last one. The two or three Best Performer Award winners will be

extended overseas educational tours. However, the following differences will occur:

- i) The number of sections has been increased from 26 to 31. Six new Chinese music instrumental sections will be introduced to accommodate students of the Sherng (open, senior and junior) and the Yang-Qin (open, senior and junior), the followings for which the organisers believe are increasing;
- ii) Ensemble playing will be given greater emphasis this year. One of the adjudicators of the 1982 Competition commented rightly that "the whole point of learning music is to enable people to make music together". To this end, a new section (the fifth) will be introduced to encourage students of Chinese instruments to play together. On the Western music front, the Brass Ensemble section, first introduced in 1982, will be enlarged into a general ensemble section for any combination of instruments. We expect good response to the general ensemble section. Last year, one out of five brass ensembles contesting secured a place in the Grand Finals;
- iii) To enhance the educational aspect of the Competition, all contestants of the 1983 Competition will be given certificates reflecting the quality of their performances. Certificates of Participation, of Merit and of Distinction will be awarded according to the quality of performance presented. This is a form of feedback to the contestants of their ability and talent;
- iv) Miniature copies of the trophy designed by local sculptor, Mr Ng Eng Teng, will also be presented to all sectional winners as souvenirs.

This year the organisers have decided to revive the Society's traditional practice of imposing a registration fee on each entry submitted. In previous years, there have been occasions when adjudicators waited expectantly for contestants who did not appear and had not the courtesy of informing the organisers in advance of their intent to withdraw. To eliminate this inconvenience and to enable recovery of some of the cost of organising the Competition, a \$15 registration fee will be imposed on each entry submitted regardless of whether it is a solo or ensemble entry. In this way, we expect to receive only serious applications from those who are more confident of their abilities.

Before I end my speech, I would like to thank our generous sponsors, ESSO Singapore Pte Ltd, for continuing to support this worthy project despite the present business recession. ESSO has not flinched from the responsibility it undertook since 1980, that is the sole sponsorship of the National Music Competition. The Ministry, the Society and all aspiring young musicians are grateful to ESSO for the golden opportunity afforded by its contribution.

I have pleasure in launching the Fourth National Music Competition.
